

Thomas Altizer, 91, Proponent of ‘God Is Dead’ Theology, Dies

By Katharine Q. Seelye

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Thomas J. J. Altizer, one of a handful of radical theologians in the 1960s who espoused that “God is dead,” died on Wednesday in Stroudsburg, Pa. He was 91.

His daughter, Katharine Altizer, said the cause was complications of a stroke. Dr. Altizer, who lived in Mount Pocono, Pa., was under hospice care at the time.

The idea that God was dead had been around for centuries, most prominently with Nietzsche in the late 1800s. But after World War II and the Holocaust, it re-emerged in the United States, as Dr. Altizer, who taught religion at Emory University in Atlanta, and others questioned whether a benevolent God could exist.

The subject burst out of the ivory tower on April 8, 1966, when a stark Time magazine cover, all black with bold red letters, pointedly asked: “Is God Dead?”

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